

MNRF Gypsy Moth notes July 2020 *(Notes from correspondence with a FOCA member)*

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) Parry Sound District has been receiving inquiries regarding the gypsy moth infestations that are being observed in the Parry Sound District.

The MNRF does conduct annual surveys of forest health conditions. Once data is compiled this information is made available in a forest health condition report found here:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/forest-health-conditions> .

The actual survey and analysis of forest health survey information is coordinated and the responsibility of the Science and Research Branch of MNRF, not individual Districts. I have included some additional information below in hopes it will be helpful in answering some of your questions. If you would like any more information please feel free to reach out to Forest Health Technician, Ariel Illic with Science and Research Branch in North Bay at Ariel.illic@ontario.ca .

General information about the gypsy moth situation in 2020:

Overall there is nothing unique about the infestation currently being experienced this season. The ministry has been tracking the gypsy moth infestation, which has expanded throughout the south/southwestern part of Ontario in 2020. The current infestation increased in 2019 to just over 47,000 hectares. Gypsy moth outbreaks occur every 7 to 10 years - outbreaks usually last 3 to 5 years.

Gypsy moth are a free-feeding defoliator of hardwood tree species that feed from late May to late June. Once the feeding ceases the trees have the ability to produce a second crop of leaves that will enable them to continue to grow throughout the summer. Trees growing vigorously can withstand a few seasons of severe defoliation with little impact. People are encouraged to avoid direct contact with the gypsy moth as the tiny hairs found on the larva can cause breathing issues and potential allergic reactions

Private woodlot owners can get a registered pesticide application company to spray their forest in the spring with Btk (*Bacillus thuringiensis*). On a larger scale this is best carried out by teaming up with other landowners wishing to spray as well and take advantage of economies of scale. Spraying is only effective in the spring. On a smaller scale (ornamental or yard trees) physical removal of egg masses in the fall can be quite effective. In the spring, once the eggs have hatched, tree banding with burlap will give the travelling larvae a place to congregate during the warm days and they can then be physically removed and killed. Extended winter days of extreme cold have also been proven to have an impact on overwintering larvae found in egg masses above the snow line.

What is the status of Gypsy Moth population in eastern Ontario?

Gypsy moth defoliation was detected during aerial surveys in the eastern part of the province in 2019 with approximately 400 hectares of defoliation reported.

The MNRF is evaluating options to conduct aerial surveys followed by ground verification. Aerial surveys would concentrate in this region to document any expansion of the outbreak and to detect any new areas. Aerial surveys and delineation would be followed by ground verification to determine severity and to check populations for potential virus.

Does the MNRF conduct spray programs?

The MNRF does not carry out insect control programs on private land. Pest management is the responsibility of the landowner or municipality.

More information on gypsy moth can be found at: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/gypsy-moth> .

Thank you.

Michael Henry, R.P.F.

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